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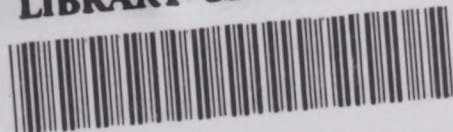
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IGNAZIO

A Drop From the Melting Pot

By JESSIE MILLS

IGNAZIO

A DROP FROM THE MELTING POT

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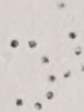
JESSIE MILLS

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by
JESSIE MILLS.

To the friends who have given me encouragement in publishing this little story, this book is gratefully inscribed.

THE AUTHOR.

IGNAZIO

A DROP FROM THE MELTING POT.

OUR home is in the middle west, not many miles from the Illinois river. The country is rich, with golden corn for its girdle and beds of coal for its footstool. Rich in resources, it is rich in beauty, too, for those who love its windblown fields of ripened grain, contrasting sharply with dark green seas of glistening corn, all bathed in the sunlight chased by the shadows.

The city in which we live has about twelve thousand inhabitants. It is attractive with its shaded streets and well-kept lawns. A manufacturing city, it makes more plows than any city in the world. In the outside world it is best known as Plow City. The implements find their way to the remote corners of the world and in return large numbers of immigrants, from many different countries find their way here to help us in our industries. One teacher in our public schools has a little melting pot all her own in which are gathered children of eighteen nationalities.

Twice I had seen Ignazio before he came to live in our neighborhood; once at a church Christmas tree where my attention was arrested by his singularly beautiful face aglow with wonder and delight. He was a typical Italian boy, four years old, with a mass of dark brown curls falling around his face, a rich olive complexion, red

cheeks, large, dark, expressive eyes and chubby form. With a tiny shawl pinned quaintly around his shoulders, Ignazio was a rarely attractive and picturesque little figure.

The next summer, seated in a carriage at a band concert, I saw him come trotting swiftly across the street from his father's fruit store near by, dodging the stream of carriages constantly passing, to the brightly lighted park in the center of our public square. Dressed in blue overalls he lay rolling and tumbling on the grass or stood watching the crowd and listening to the music, personified gladness.

That summer there was a change of occupants in a house two doors from us and to my delight I discovered Ignazio rolling on our terrace and playing with the children in the street.

Miss Nell, our next door neighbor, a beautiful girl some sixteen years of age, saw Ignazio, too, and was captivated by him. Just past five years old he was bright, sunny, imperious, with a temper that flashed. He had caught the language of the street in his home on the public square. Miss Nell told him how much she wanted him to play in her yard but that he couldn't if he used such words. His response was instant.. He basked in her love, played freely on her grounds and rode with her in her surrey devoted to "Mister" Nell. Little by little as we became acquainted we learned the family history.

Ignazio's father, Joseph Caruso, left Sicily when twenty years of age because, as he recently told me, "I was almost crazy. No chance! No chance! Wages nineteen cents a day." So he broke away in spite of his mother's tears, reaching Canada penniless. With the universal sign language he obtained odd jobs for five weeks, when he had saved enough to buy a large basket, stock it with fruit and start in business.

Later he returned to Sicily for a wife, coming back to Canada where Ignazio was born. When the boy was two years old they came to Plow City where Mr. Caruso and his brother established a substantial fruit business with, later, a rating in Dun and Bradstreet.

Soon after Ignazio came to be our neighbor my mother passed away. He appeared at our door, awe and sorrow in his large, dark eyes, and asked in awestruck tones, "Did a lady die here?"

With this introduction we were soon friends and one evening my sister took Ignazio a ride with Black Bess. The sun was setting a ball of flame. When she turned south Ignazio noticed that the sun seemed to move with them. Much excited he exclaimed, "It's comin'! It's comin' right along with us! Who put it up there?"

"God."

"Is he a man or a woman?"

A few days later he rode out with me. He sat silent, gazing at the white clouds floating in the

sky, then asked, with wonder, "The black clouds, the white clouds, where are they when we cannot see them? Who put them up there?"

"God."

"Oh, Gy! Gy! I know all about him! He's the one who put the sun up there. Now *is* he a man or a woman?"

Then followed a rapid fire of questions, "When Gy sees a cow, what does he do? When Gy sees a squirrel, what does he do? When Gy sees man bust a tree, what does he do?"

"Do you mean chop a tree down?" I asked.

"Yes, what does Gy do?"

After a long pause, he asked slowly, "When Gy sees man swear, what does Gy do?"

Then still more slowly, "When Gy sees man swear and man die, what does Gy do?"

Quite beyond my depth I took refuge in teaching him, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

We had driven a long distance by a circuitous route. As we neared a bridge at the foot of a hill, he said, "My papa shot a rabbit there."

"Were you ever here before?" I asked, with surprise.

"Yes, my papa brought me out to the dumplin' ground."

The dumping ground was nearer town, reached by another road, but he was not mistaken and had

recognized the place instantly. His sense of locality and direction was remarkable.

Ignazio had formed the habit of coming to our house daily and often many times a day. When he was five and a half years old he started to school. This opened a new enchanted world to him. He had changed greatly since coming into the neighborhood. The imperiousness had dropped away and seldom did we see a flash of temper. A quiet reasonableness, with an all pervasive friendliness had taken its place. His mind, active before, after he started to school was alive with questions. Except for a special aptitude for figures, the various studies and occupations made almost equal appeal to him with his richly varied nature. During that first year, lying on the floor at our home, he would fill foolscap pages with number work. When given a column of figures to write he said, "I haven't had one thousand. Are there three oughts?" and before a reply could be given he had written it correctly. In eleven years of experience his teacher had found no pupil equal to Ignazio in number work. In ten minutes he would fill a foolscap page with sums in addition and subtraction without a mistake.

The stories told by his teacher appealed strongly to his imagination and he would tell of wonderful happenings on the street and in the woods. When I would ask, "Is that really true, Ignazio?" "Why

no, Miss Jessie," he would answer, in surprise that I should ask, "I am telling you a story."

My father sometimes protested against allowing his mind to be so constantly on the alert and we would seek to turn his thought into a lighter vein. We gave him a shelf where he could keep Mother Goose and other books and games. These he used freely but he never meddled with anything. If he was doing what we did not wish him to do he heeded the lightest request.

"Ignazio," I said one day, "there are no such words as 'ain't and 'haint'. Don't you think you had better cut them out?"

"Why, Miss Jessie, I will cut them out and burn them up," was his quick response.

A few days later as I was setting the table, Ignazio asked from the couch where he was sitting, "Miss Jessie, aren't you happy?"

"Why, yes, Ignazio; why do you ask?"

"I said it right," he answered triumphantly. Then for ten or fifteen minutes he formed sentences with "aren't" and "isn't."

We tried to conserve some of Ignazio's unique expressions but one by one they dropped away. The word "bust," more forcible than elegant, we left unchallenged and he used it with telling effect. How he worked out the place it should occupy in English grammar, revealing his remarkable instinct for the science of language, was shown when he exclaimed "Why, Miss Jessie, there are

three breaks aren't there? Break, broke, bust."

In the next spring he brought his sister Ninuzza for the first time, as she had been too timid to come before. A little three-year-old, her hair which hung about her shoulders in a profusion of curls, was lighter brown than Ignazio's, her cheeks redder, her skin fairer and she had sparkling eyes and deep dimples. They came hand in hand and their radiant faces were very fair to see. Ignazio had taken great delight in a large scrap book. This the children enjoyed together. His paternal care of her was beautiful. The only words she spoke that first day and for long were, "Good bye, I'm goin'!" Then suddenly she surprised us by the ease with which she spoke English. With beaming face, Ignazio told my sister, when they were alone together, "Ninuzza follow me wherever I go."

"Do you like to have her?" my sister asked.

"Yes," radiantly, "Ninuzza love me, I love Ninuzza."

In an unconventional way he expressed so much gratitude I had not said much about "Thank you," but when my sister had done some favor for him once, I said, "Ignazio, you have forgotten something."

Puzzled, he replied, "I don't know if I have." When it came to him he flushed so painfully I was sorry I had spoken. The children were just starting home. Asking them to wait on the front

porch I slipped out the side door and picked two golden iris blossoms and gave them to Ignazio. His face lighted with pleasure but his only words were, "One for each."

I never heard him boast. When he was learning to print—he had written for some time—he showed me the word tree. The last e was perfect and thinking he had done well with all the letters, I praised him. "No, Miss Jessie," he said, "looking at the word critically, "That's good," pointing to the one perfect letter. "The others aren't good, but I am a little boy. Perhaps when I am a big boy I can print nicely."

Decoration day my sister took our little neighbor to the cemetery with a large basket of flowers. Ignazio laid the flowers out of the basket with reverent care. He seemed absorbed in interest, but on the way home he said, "I wish there was school to-day."

"You couldn't have had this ride if there had been school."

"No, but I like school best."

The last day of school my sister found the following note tied to our front door knob:

"Dear Miss Mills,

"I love you. School is out and I have got to play for three months.

"Ignazio Caruse."

In America the family were known as Caruse. Ignazio's love of nature was an outstanding characteristic. The first summer of our acquaintance, at the home of a friend, he was given a beautiful bunch of flowers. He told my sister on the way home, "I put him in the groun' an' he will grow."

"If you put them in the ground they will fade, but if you put them into water they will keep fresh," she replied. Not long after he caught sight of my sister and called in rueful tones, "I put the flowers into water an' he all died."

The next spring he called to her as he was passing by to school, "I have a little rosebush just so high," measuring about six inches with his fingers, "an' it has hatched out a tiny little bud."

He watched with keen interest the flowers as they bloomed in the spring. The blue blossoms of the myrtle, the white lilacs, the lilies of the valley, the iris and wistaria, but when the roses came he reveled in their beauty. Decked with the roses, with bunches of them in their hands, he and Ninuzza would have challenged the brush of an artist.

The preceding autumn a long country drive took them through Bittersweet lane, the wildest, most picturesque bit of scenery near Plow City. Absorbed in opening milkweed pods and blowing the silky down away he had not noticed the country through which they were passing. Looking up

suddenly, he saw high hills clothed in their brilliant autumn dress, beyond a deep valley through which ran a winding stream. With a sweeping gesture of both hands toward the scene, he exclaimed, "Oh, ain't him pretty!"

The afterglow of a sunset attracted his attention, filling him with delight. The rich maroons and purples were most beautiful, but few children would have noticed them. Stretching his hands out eagerly toward the scene, he exclaimed excitedly, "Oh, ain't him pretty! Can't we catch him?" A year later he asked my sister if she remembered that *beautiful* sunset. With an artist's instinct Ignazio made mental pictures of what he saw, adding imaginary touches here and there. Seeing a herd of cattle in a pasture, some standing, some lying down, he called my attention to the color of each, red, black, faun colored. Rubbing his hands softly down either side of his neck and pointing to a vacant spot in the center of the herd, he said, "I like a pure white one lyin' there;" coming to a high, broad tableland, "I like my schoolhouse there," and when we saw a valley with its woods and winding creek, he added, "I like my house there."

Asked by others to say whom he liked best he always said, "I like you all best." There was just one thing he would say he liked best and that was school. His thirst for knowledge was insatiable.

"Miss Jessie, how many grades are there? I want to go to the two hundredth grade."

When in March Ignazio had passed his sixth birthday he came in one of his silent moods. After sitting for some time without speaking, he said, with slow emphasis, with a nod and pause after each word, "I—like—God." I used to swear and I used to smoke but I don't any more."

Not content to live on the surface he sought to trace things to their hidden sources. I found him lying on the lounge one day, a puzzled look on his face, trying to think something out. At last he said, speaking slowly, as if in deep perplexity, "I don't understand. Was the first duck a duck or an egg? Was the first man a man or a baby? If it was a baby who took care of it? Did God?"

I had taught him the beatitudes and a number of bible verses. One day he asked, "Aren't there any more of the 'blesseds'? I like the 'blesseds' best of all."

A scroll of Bible pictures was a source of unfailing delight. Scarcely a day passed that summer that he did not leave his play with the children and ask me to tell him about the "Jesus book." As he became familiar with the stories he would gather a group of children about him on our side porch or around the center table and having settled who should turn the scroll by drawing cuts, tell them about the pictures. That mingled group of Italian and Anglo-Saxon faces made a picture

of rare beauty. His way of telling of the pictures was original and vivid. "Mary and Joseph went to the hotel an' it was full, so they had to go to the barn." The story of the rich young ruler impressed him deeply; "Jesus told the rich ruler man to go and sell all that he had an' give to the poor, *an' he never but he was sorry.*"

One bright summer morning Ignazio and I had driven around a quarter section. He had counted all the cows as was his wont and was wildly delighted with the squirrels. As we neared town he summed up what we had seen. Placing his hands together then separating them with a sweeping gesture after each clause, he said, "All the cows, an' all the sheep, an' all the pigs, an' all the squirrels, an' all the horses, an' all the grass, an' all the trees," then pausing he turned his face skyward and pointing up, added with awe, "an' God up there."

Ignazio was very loyal to his own people through the years. He was our interpreter but sometimes we wished we might speak directly with the mother. As we were sitting on the porch one evening Ignazio said, "Ninuzza say to my mama, 'Little children love each another.' My mama write it down. My papa come from the store. My mama say to my papa, 'Little children love each another'."

This pleased us giving evidence as it did of the sympathetic interest of his parents.

Fourth of July was coming. My sister had taught Ignazio a poem and we were celebrating by firing crackers in our backyard with Ignazio and two or three neighbor boys. Ignazio's father came hurriedly down the driveway an anxious look upon his face. When he caught sight of my sister and me his face cleared. I stepped forward to speak to him. "That's all right. That's all right, Miss Jess. I was afraid Ignazio would get hurt. I don't want him to be out with rough, bad boys. I want Ignazio to be good an' better." We shared the father's anxiety. Ignazio had confessed with shame that sometimes, stung by the taunts of the boys, he had sworn.

How the word "dago" stung him we had a chance to know. As he was riding with *me* through the outskirts of the town two rude boys called out to him, "Dago! Dago!" Ignazio made no response and the only evidences that he had heard were in the deep flush which overspread his face, a furtive glance at me, to see whether I had heard, and a shrinking movement into the corner of the buggy seat, almost as though he had been struck. Though a favorite with his school fellows they sometimes did not resist the impulse to tease him. My sister was sitting in her room where she had a view of the street but was not seen. Through the open window she heard some schoolboys call out to Ignazio, who was passing, "Dago, Dago!" The blood rushed into his face

and he said in a subdued and pleading tone, "You needn't call me that where Miss Mills can hear." He could not bear to be humiliated before us.

Ignazio had a gift for quiet, steady, prolonged work. He became greatly interested in silk portieres my sister was making. He had a keen sense of love of color. Her scheme for sorting the colors was quite complicated—would have been confusing to most grown persons. For two hours Ignazio sorted the colors for her with great painstaking making no mistakes.

Ignazio took great pleasure in constructing long trains of street cars for Ninuzza and himself of shoe boxes illuminated with candles. Through the stained glass windows, made of different colored papers, passengers could be plainly seen when the candles were lighted and the shades of evening had fallen. Other children would join them with their cars and the evening was enlivened by the color and brightness. We were the custodians of these cars and many of Ignazio's dearest treasures, for he was very careful of his books and toys fearing they would be destroyed at home by baby fingers.

The practical side of Ignazio's nature found expression when at the age of seven he started in business. Saturday evening, the night of our band concert, when the square was thronged with people from the town and surrounding country, he sold popcorn and drove a thriving business with

which he suffered nothing to interfere. Great was the interest of the people in the picturesque little figure, weaving his way in and out of the crowd, making swift and accurate change.

Wherever Black Bess took us through the town or country he was greeted by name. Sometimes I would ask, "Ignazio, who was that?" "He know me but I don't know who he be."

Driving in from the country with Ignazio when he was a little fellow, at a turn of the road we came upon a horse stretched upon the ground dead. Shocked by the sight, he asked, in distress, "Miss Mills, what made he die?"

"He is so thin he looks as though he had starved to death," she replied.

He gazed with deep pity in his eyes, then exclaimed, "My papa gets me plenty to eat—*plenty*."

He had a quick deep sympathy. A friend had lost her father and Ignazio held the horse while I went in to see her. When he learned she was left alone he said with sympathy, "There will be no one to eat at the table with her." His appreciation of circumstances and situations was unusual.

Father, Ignazio and I started for a ride but the cold wind drove my father back. When he left Ignazio settled himself comfortably upon the seat, saying, "Now we have more room." The remark was not like him in its seeming want of thought for my father, but it was only in seeming for when we were a long way out and he saw some

squirrels he eagerly exclaimed "I wish your father hadn't gone back, I wanted him to see the squirrels!"

There was no time when Ignazio's laugh rang through the house more merrily than when he had slipped in and hidden behind a door or under a table and we would come upon him unaware. His love of games was keen and as I was forced to spend many idle hours many were the games of tit tat toe, jack straws and checkers we played. If he found me lying down he never asked for anything but would sit and talk quietly till I arose. His first question was always, "Miss Jessie, are you rested?" If I said, "Yes," "Could you play a game with me?"

We had many drawn battles and often I was completely routed.

Once, unable to play I asked my brother to take my place at tit tat toe. Ignazio constantly on the alert was worsting him without mercy. My aunt stepping out on the porch where they were playing asked, "Ignazio, who is beating?"

He colored, hesitated, then answered with relief as a way out came to him, "The old cat is ahead." Modesty and deference were instinctive with him.

His manner toward my father was always reverential and strong was the friendship between them.

The summer after Ignazio was eight years old

he asked if he might put a croquet set on our ground as he had no place for one at home. We had an ideal spot between our house and the garden, shaded by our cherry trees and surrounding elms and maples. Many were the hours he spent alone. We called it our fair and square ground and I acted as umpire. Like all croquet grounds it proved a character tester, revealing both the weakness and strength of the players and at times I saw the hot flash of Ignazio's temper and had a chance to test the quality of his will. There were some good players, but he had the surest stroke. After Ninuzza and Elizabeth, the little daughter of a physician who lived next door, entered the lists the cutest pictures were seen. It was not long before they were more than a match for the average player and with their free and independent strokes they sometimes defeated even Ignazio.

There was a deep vein of caution in Ignazio's nature which ran through all his choices. He did not wish to get into a situation he could not see his way through.

When Miss Nell moved to California deep was our regret, but her mantle fell on Josephine, the ten year old daughter of our new neighbors. With her spacious playhouse, furnished with all that dolls or children might desire and Sim, her Shetland pony, hers was an enchanted kingdom and she ruled with impartial love and justice, a queen. Sim with his carriage full of happy children took

them long drives. Then with a saddle on his back each little boy and girl rode so many times around the driveway encircling our place, even two year old Pedro not missing his ride. When Josephine gave Ninuzza a large wax doll with eyes that opened and shut and long ringlets of real hair, Ninuzza's heart was too full for speech.

Ignazio led such a natural life, so free from self-consciousness, that at work or play he was always at his best. He was very fond of music. From a little fellow he had sung and that summer he joined us Sunday afternoons in singing hymns. Though words and music were both new to him he read them through with few mistakes, soon singing them perfectly. Then out in the open, under the shade of the elm tree the children would gather around my cot and we would sing songs and clear, strong, sweet, true, it was Ignazio's voice that led.

When we invited the children to spend the day at Chautauqua with us saying we would furnish the lunch, they would come generously supplied with fruit for us all and Thanksgiving, Christmas and many other times the children came laden with the choicest fruits, radiant with the pleasure of giving.

The long vacations were perplexing times for us as Ignazio grew older. The lads, who had been such good playfellows for him, had moved from the neighborhood and he sought companions where he could find them. With bat and ball he led a

sturdy active life and even when "aint" and "haint" crept into his vocabulary again we still were glad to have him develop his body and let the brain lie fallow, but at times we grew very anxious as we saw the influence upon him and we wondered what form our civilization would furnish for this plastic nature waiting to be cast in the finest mold. We longed for a place where he could play with boys of his own age manly sports suited to develop a strong, supple body, under wholesome influences. Each year the opening of school cleared the sky and Ignazio was with us as frequently as ever, his mind teeming with questions.

Ignazio had looked forward to drawing books from the public library and when at the age of ten the privilege was his it was a great help. He still longed for a companion of his own age but dressed neatly he spent most of the long vacation reading quietly at home, on our croquet grounds, or playing games with us, and teaching Elizabeth and Ninuzza to play authors.

In July Josephine fell dangerously sick and the neighborhood was hushed. One afternoon as the children were playing on the croquet ground with subdued voices, Josephine's mother came out and asked Ignazio to mail a letter for her. Both my sister and myself were impressed by the subtle mingling of sorrow, sympathy and dignity in face and manner as he stepped forward to take the

letter from her hand, honored that under such circumstances he could be of service.

About this time Mr. Caruso told me he was going to take his family to Italy for a visit, "I haven't seen my father for twelve years and my wife wants to see her mother. We must go an' when we come back we will live dif'rent."

"You mean you have been camping," I replied.

"Exactly, but when we come back we settle down an' have a home."

The entire family came to bid us goodbye, father, mother, Ignazio, Ninuzza, Pedro and baby Josephine, all dressed in American style. Mrs. Caruso's graceful black lace mantilla had given place to an American hat.

We followed them out, my father, sister and I, watching them enter the omnibus with glad and grateful hearts, yet with a touch of sadness. A thousand miles of land, the broad ocean and the blue Mediterranean would soon separate us and who knew——

Ignazio stood on the steps of the bus waving us goodbye and they were off.

"Termeni Imerese,

"Sep. 23, 1910.

"Dear Miss Mills and Miss Jessie,

"I will write you a few lines to let you know we are all well, father, mother, sisters and brother. Miss Mills we have been having a very good time.

Still I don't like to stay here long but my father says he is going to stay all winter. We see here lots of mountains and see here is lots of rocks. Here is the best fish of all and we have them nearly every dinner. We live near the ocean they catch fish every night and sell them in the morning. Here is lots of fresh figs right on the tree and lots of fresh grapes. There are lots of lemons trees and nice fresh lemons.

"I want to know if you got the postal cards. How is all of yous, and I like to know how is Josephine. I like to know how is cousin Jimmie my uncle Frank and aunt Josephine and I like to know how is Elizabeth C—— and Doctor C—— and Mrs. C—— and the little boy. and I give the best regards to the neighborhood where I live. That is all I got to say right now.

"I remind,

"Yours Truly

"Ignazio Caruse."

"Termini Imerese,

"Dec. 14, 1910.

"Dear Miss Mills and Miss Jessie,

"I received your letter and am glad to hear from you. and I am glad to hear that you are all well. I understand there has been good weather, and here is south wind and warm all the time. I wish to see you, Miss Jessie and all our Friends. I understand little Jimmy is lonesome since we

been away and I hope he will know us when we get back there. I am very glad Aunt Josephine can speak English very much. and I am glad Miss Jessie is learning her. I am awfully sorry to hear that Josephine is dead. I understand Dr. C—— will be moving away from the neighborhood and I am sorry to lose this nice people. I am awfully glad to hear that baby Philip is well. You said that Pedro will forget English and he forgot some now but when we go back we will learn more. We talk sometime with him. I think we don't forget any more. Ninuzza and I go to school here. I like to go to school here. I like to learn to read and write Italian before we go back. You haven't got a idea how many mountains we have around this town. Three or four miles from the town. They are big and so high. Here is all kind of fresh fish all the time. Every day they pass our house. You haven't got a idea how they are. If I could send a good mass of fish I would send them long ago, My friend Miss Mills I hope these months will pass right away so I will be there right away, I think I can find some other boys to play with. I wish I could sing some hymns and play some games too but we can't come over there because the water is rough in the winter time. My father is afraid if we get all sick. I am learning in school to read and write Italian we don't like it in Italy, Uncle Frank tells you all right our right name is Caruso. Ninuzza, Pedro and I like

to see my cousin Jimmy, Dear Miss Jessie I am glad you miss us very much and we miss you too. My mother and father talk about you all the time.

"Kindest regards to your father and Miss Jessie. My father and mother, grandpa and grandma do the same. Kindest regards to Uncle Frank, his wife and little Jimmy. We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

"Yours truly,

"good by

Ignazio Caruso."

"Termini Emerese,

"Mch. 23, 1911.

"Dear miss Mills

"I received your welcome letter and you don't know how glad I was to hear from you. Dear Miss Jessie I think we staid here very long and I think we will go in a very short time but we don't know yet when we will go. Miss Jessie you tell our Uncle Frank to not be lonesome without us, because we will be there in a very short time. Tell him to do the best he can in the business. you said in the letter Elizabeth went there and played checkers I wish you play once more for me. you have to practicing very good because I will beat both of yous you said that you and the whole family want to see us and we want to see you and the whole family. You said in the letter to bring a whole lot of Italian books but I wont forget it. When we go back there again we will

fix our right name because our right name is Caruso. You said in the letter that you don't forget us and we don't forget you how long we live. We plan to come there the first part of the summer. You tell my Uncle Frank that when I write the next letter I write better in Italian because we get better every day. The people is all surprised that how I did learn so quick. Of course we learn lots that is good but nothing that is bad. I am awfully glad that there is another school built. When it was my birthday we had a big holiday. I am awfully glad to receive that news about Caruso the best singer in the world. I want to play a game of croquet when I come. I am awfully glad to hear that Philip is running alone. Give my best regards to Miss C—— and family Miss F—— and family Miss A—— and family and give my best regards to Uncle Frank and Aunt Josephine and little Jimmy. I haven't got anything else to say

“Your best friend,

“Ignazio Caruso.

“goodby goodby the whole family.”

“Termini Imerese

“Aug. 23, 1911.

Dear Miss Mills,

“We are all well and I hope yous the same. I was awful glad to hear from yous.

“We can't go in America because in Palermo we have to stay five days and in New York or Boston

we have to stay twenty or thirty days in the ocean for the cholera.

"We are getting along fine but I hope the cholera will stop soon so I will go in America when I go over there I will tell you lots of things.

"Here is the places of cholera Palermo Cifalo Petralea and other little towns. In Palermo they die thirty-five to forty-five a day. This is in the newspaper.

"Here in this town there are houses where they carry the people with cholera but they die a few there houses are full of people with cholera.

"The same day I wrote the letter they took ten in these houses with cholera. I hope the cholera will soon be stopped. In this town now it is awful hot. I think the people get sick for this hot weather.

"I was awful glad that yous over there were having Chautauqua. I am awful glad Miss Jessie is getting stronger. When I go over there I will join yous in singing songs.

"I wish you will tell to Uncle Frank we can't start over there because for the cholera. We got everything ready to start long time ago.

"Your old friend,

"Ignazio Caruso.

"Goodby goodby goodby."

Then another letter to my sister filled with longing. The quarantine did not lift until too late.

Mr. Caruso would not venture to bring his family home over stormtossed winter seas. Ignazio sent salutations to each one of his friends, then—"I shall never forget you the longest day I live. Goodby, goodby, goodby."

Early in November word came to us that Ignazio had died on the twenty-third of October after four days illness. They had all escaped the cholera, but Ignazio had succumbed to scarlet fever and diphtheria combined. Had he lived till March he would have been twelve years old.

After a stormy voyage, the following spring the family returned under an almost crushing burden of grief.

Mr. Caruso told me of Ignazio's life in Italy. How he was growing tall and more slender and how the people loved him. Of their picking olives together in their olive grove some miles from Termini. Of hunting expeditions to the mountains and by the sea and of his unyielding homesickness. How, when he had learned to read in Italian, he would sit in the doorway and read aloud from a book he had bought from a blind man, to the people who gathered to hear him till the crowd reached across the street. Stepping to the door his father asked, "Why do you read so loud, Ignazio?"

"Papa, the people cannot read for themselves and they want to hear."

In his sweet clear voice he would sing to them

in English, then in Italian that they might understand.

It was one morning in October when Ignazio's cousin had gone hunting taking him with him. When they returned in the evening Ignazio was very sick. As he lay down he said, "Papa, I don't think I will ever get up from this, don't leave me," and he never did.

The best medical skill of Termini and Palermo could not save him.

About half a dozen times during those four days he looked up and said, "Papa, don't you see him?"

"See who, Ignazio?"

"Jesus, God is here."

True to his purpose, after their return from Sicily Mr. Caruso and his brother, who had lived with him, purchased the house in which they were living and the one adjoining. When the street had been paved it left these two houses below grade. They raised them to grade, remodelled them and put in the modern conveniences. They are no longer camping out but living in their own comfortable homes.

Ninuzza, strong, trustworthy, with a sturdy independence which will stand her in good stead in the battle of life, is winning marks in her school work of which we are justly proud. In this work she has neither asked nor accepted help for two years. Pedro, highstrung, sympathetic, warmhearted, quick to resent, quick to forgive,

quick in his response to the appeal of the good, loves his school and has certificates that testify he has been neither absent nor tardy during the four years he has attended school. Last spring he won a dollar prize from the commercial club for the second best vegetable garden made by the children of his school. He is doing well in his studies, excelling in some. Seven years old Josephine, delicate, acutely sensitive, imaginative, resembling Ignazio strongly in looks and mental characteristics, is a joy to her teachers and to us all. Little Mary, the newcomer and the pet of the household, gives evidence that in her ability to learn she will not be behind the rest.

Many are the good times we have together but Ignazio is not here.

JESSIE MILLS.

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